Code	Item	Policy	Condition
1006	Paddy (Rice in husk)	Restricted	Export permitted under licence
			with Markings indicating the product being Indian Basmati Rice, in whatever manner, shall also be permitted to the extent of actual requirements considering the total quantity of the consignment and the sizes of the empty bags being exported.
1006	Rice Non-Basmati	Free	Export allowed subject to registration of contracts with the Agricultural & Processed Foods Export Development Authority (APEDA), New Delhi.

Free Import of Oilseeds

2335. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow free import of oilseeds like soyabean and sunflower;

(b) whether it is a fact that the country has already attained/nearing self-sufficiency in edible oils; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for allowing free import of oilseeds stating the period by which dependency on imports is likely to be over?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Although concerted efforts are underway through the implementation of the Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) in 23 States, covering 374 slected Districts to increase the production of Oilseeds and to make the country self-relieant in edible oil, and although the production of oilseeds is increasing year after year, the increase in production of oilseeds is not keeping pace with the increasing demand for edible oil due to increase in population and improvement in standard of living. The domestic demand and supply of edible oils in the country in the Oil Year 1998-99 is estimated to be 82 Lakh MT and 68 Lakh MT respectively. Government has, therefore, allowed free import of oilseeds, namely, Soyabean in split/cracked form, Sunflower and Rapeseed to meet the shortage of edible oils. Import of Sunflower and Rapeseed is allowed subject to quarantine requirements.

Import of cigarettes for re-export

2336. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a huge quantity of cigarettes is being imported for the purpose of re-export;

(b) if so, the quantity imported and re-exported during each of the last three years alongwith the details of the countries/agencies to which these have been re-exported; and

(c) the norms fixed for re-export of cigarettes?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) As per the Import Policy, cigarettes (IT CHS Code 24.02) fall under Restricted List of items. No proposal has been received for allowing import of cigarettes for the purpose of re-export. Under the Duty Exemption Scheme, there are no norms where import of cigarettes is allowed for re-export of cigarettes.

DEPB rates

2337. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of applications pending for fixation of DEPB rates as on date;

(b) whether it is a fact that exporters are not getting any benefit due to the delay in fixing DEPB rates;

(c) whether it is also a fact that due to stringent guidelines many small exporters are not able to get the rates fixed for these items; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to improve the system?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Fixation of DEPB rates is a continuous process. As on date, 68 applications are pending for fixation of rates.

(b) All exporters are not covered by the DEPB scheme. For cases which are not covered by this scheme, two other alternative schemes are available, namely, the Duty Drawback Scheme and the Advance Licensing Scheme, under which duty relief is provided to the exporters.

(c) and (d) The guidelines are not stringent. A standard procedure to be followed for deciding the DEPB rates is laid down under para 7.25 of the Exim Policy, 1997—2000 and Appendix 52 of the Handbook of Procedure Vol. 1, 1997—2000 as amended.

Fall in export of Pharmaceuticals

2338. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the fall in export of pharmaceuticals by Rs. 200 crores is due to non-issuance of N.O.C. by the Ministry of Health;

(b) if so, whether Government have fixed responsibilities of the officers concerned; and

(c) if so, the names and designations of the officers and action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Trade Deficit

2339. SHRI SITARAM KESRI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the trade balance deficit has gone up from $ 5.6 billion in 1997-98 to $ 6.7 billion in 1998-99 having an adverse impact on the national economy;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government have already taken or proposed to be taken to improve the position?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) As per the provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), the trade deficit during 1997-98 was to the tune of US $ 6799 million. During April-October, 1998-99 the trade deficit has been estimated as US $ 5797 million.